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## House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN).

### DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,  
March 22, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable RANDY HULTGREN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,  
*Speaker of the House of Representatives.*

### MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

### SURGE IN CITIZENSHIP APPLICATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I have spoken here before about the surge in demand for citizenship we are seeing in the Fourth Congressional District of Illinois. Thousands who are eligible are taking the step to become citizens because they feel threatened by a President and administration that does not seem to think of immigrants, refugees, Muslims, or Latinos as human beings. So the one way to pro-

tect oneself and to protect one's family is to apply for citizenship if you are eligible.

Some days they are lined up out the door of my office. So full are our daily appointments, we had to add a Saturday citizenship workshop to accommodate all of the people who wanted to apply, and we will be adding additional workshops. At one workshop a couple of weeks ago, staff and volunteers worked with families to fill out the paperwork, assemble all of the evidence and fees for the application. In one day we helped 260 people fill out their citizenship applications.

I discovered something very important. People keep coming back to me and asking: What can I do to fight back? What can I do to help immigrant communities who are under siege by President Trump, "President" Bannon, and all the rest of the people who want to drive immigrants out of the country?

So I told them they could help others apply for citizenship, and they came in droves—hipsters with funky facial hair, women with pink knit hats they made for the Women's March, environmental and LGBTQ activists, union members, and just plain old folks from my district who are not themselves immigrants but who feel the solidarity with immigrants in their community.

You know what? This new group, after getting a little training, sat for a few hours with immigrant families, going over their histories, their stories, their reasons for being here, and their reasons for applying for U.S. citizenship. And they were pretty good at filling out government forms. They formed a bond. They got to know each other. They were helping each other accomplish a mutual goal, which is standing up to xenophobia and the Trump-Bannon era.

The citizens and the applicants to become citizens are both worried about Republicans taking away their health

care and eliminating the environmental laws that have made the water we drink and the air we breathe so much safer. They worry about where women and girls will get healthcare services in cities like Chicago if Trump and his buddies defund Planned Parenthood, or what happens after the courts are stacked with judges who are so out of step with the modern era on gender and civil rights, consumer protections, women's health, and any of the other issues people care about.

Anyone who walked out of that citizenship workshop where 260 new citizenship applications were completed felt a sense of community and interconnectedness with one another. Now, it is sad to report that thousands of my constituents can't spend a Saturday morning applying for citizenship. Many of them are at legal clinics or law offices filling out papers to address the very fear that they will lose their homes, their savings, and their families if Trump's deportation force knocks on their door.

They are filling out, by the thousands, power of attorney documents and child custody papers in case they are grabbed off the street, in their homes, or, worse yet, in their places of worship. It is heartbreaking. Moms and dads are making decisions about who their kids will go to live with if they get picked up and deported. Which relative, neighbor, or older sibling will be in charge if mom and dad are taken away?

Believe me, these kids know what is going on. The 5 million U.S. citizens who have parents at risk of deportation know that their government is a threat to their safety and their security. Their own government could come to the door and upend their lives at any moment, and their parents are preparing for the worst.

It is the humanity, the love, their striving for a better life that comes through in these parents who want

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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what is best for their children and what was unavailable to them in some far-off country. These are very real people who have no legal avenues that allow them to live and work here legally, who have no options other than to hide or leave, who have been cut off from fully integrating into our society as citizens because Congress has been fighting over immigration reform. These are the people that Mr. Bannon, Mr. Sessions, and Mr. KING have been working together for years to get out of what they call their country so that our erratic new President can point to deportations and say that he is making America great again.

What is clear from the citizenship surge and all those who want to help is that America is not only great, not only kind, not only dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal, but there are Americans and those who want to be Americans willing to stand up and resist when leaders take us in the wrong direction.

Mr. Speaker, you will see millions of Americans and aspiring Americans marching together in American cities across our great Nation on May 1, and when you do, you will see this bond and this shared humanity this coming May 1.

#### CUBA AND VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss two foreign policy areas that are important to our Nation, our region, and to my constituency in south Florida. Cuba and Venezuela are two countries in our hemisphere that suffer under dictatorships and are avowed enemies of the United States.

In my native homeland of Cuba, we have seen human rights violations on the rise ever since the U.S. concessions to the Castro regime in December 2014. One example is the case of Dr. Eduardo Cardet of Holguin, Cuba, pictured here. He is a medical doctor and the leader of the Christian Liberation Movement who was savagely beaten in front of his wife and two children and has been imprisoned since November 2016. Just days ago he was sentenced to 3 years in prison.

Dr. Cardet is condemned and sentenced because he is the voice for change and a respected human rights leader. The truth is that Eduardo Cardet has been imprisoned because he is willing—and has been doing it—to tell anyone who would listen that the Cuban people do not approve of the Castro regime. For not supporting this vile Castro dictatorship and for speaking out against such cruelty and abuses, he was sentenced to 3 years.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot stand idly by as more and more prodemocracy leaders are being beaten and arrested on the island. The President and his new administration have committed to re-

versing some of the damage inflicted by the previous administration on the cause of freedom and democracy in Cuba. Our policy in Cuba should send a strong message throughout the hemisphere that the United States will no longer remain silent on these atrocities.

It is well known that Cuba has exposed, has exported its barbaric tactics to other countries in the hemisphere, namely, Venezuela. The Venezuelan people believe that there is no justice in their land. They believe that there is no respect for law in their country, and they are right.

And what about their economy?

Well, according to the International Monetary Fund, the inflation in Venezuela last year was around 800 percent—800 percent—and the inflation projection for this year is 1,600 percent. This is not sustainable, Mr. Speaker, especially when press reports are so visual when they show that Venezuelan people are scavenging for food. They don't have any money, and they are actually leaving their country in order to find food.

Venezuela has only a little over \$10 billion worth of foreign reserves, yet it owes \$7 billion in outstanding debt payments. This tells us, Mr. Speaker, that we have, sadly, not yet hit rock bottom in Venezuela and that the situation will get worse, which is why it is so important that we begin the process to bring democratic reforms to the country now in order to prevent a larger crisis that is looming in the future.

One way to achieve this, Mr. Speaker, is to impose sanctions on human rights violators. Mr. Speaker, more targeted sanctions against those individuals who are responsible for the famine and the human rights violations that are ongoing in Venezuela are desperately needed.

Let's examine some of the individuals who I believe should be on the sanctions list. First off we have Maikel Moreno. This individual, months ago, used Venezuela's kangaroo courts and ratified the unjust sentence against political prisoner Leopoldo Lopez.

How was he rewarded by the Maduro regime?

He was appointed to be the president of the Supreme Justice Tribunal. Just appalling.

Next up is Marco Torres. Marco Torres is the Venezuelan Minister of Food. Let's examine his awful track record. The food shortages in Venezuela are rampant, and it is difficult for the people to feed themselves or their families. To make matters worse, Mr. Speaker, press reports indicate that Venezuelans are eating from trash in the street just to survive. The Venezuelan people deserve better.

Next we have Jose Vilorio Sosa, this gentleman right here. He is the director of the military prison of Ramo Verde. This decrepit character is responsible for the inhumane treatment and abusive tactics against human rights activist Leopoldo Lopez.

Lastly, Susana Barreiros Rodriguez. In 2015, she was the judge of the 28th Trial Circuit Court of Caracas who was the one who originally unjustly sentenced Leopoldo Lopez to jail.

We must provide a voice for those whose rights continue to be trampled, and take swift and decisive actions such as imposing sanctions on all of these regime officials and many more who facilitate those abuses.

When it comes to the tyranny in Cuba and in Venezuela, Mr. Speaker, we must have a clear vision and a clear understanding of the nature of these rogue regimes that do not respect the rule of law, do not respect freedom of expression, and do not respect any kind of human dignity.

#### HEALTHCARE TROJAN HORSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. POCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, when Queen Helen of Sparta was abducted by the Trojan prince Paris, Helen's jilted husband convinced his brother, a Greek king, to lead an expedition to retrieve her. He was accompanied by a fleet of more than a thousand ships. They crossed the sea to Troy and demanded Helen's return.

The siege, punctuated by all sorts of battles and skirmishes, lasted more than 10 years until one day when Odysseus had a bright idea. He said: Hey, guys, let's build a really massive wooden horse. Let's pretend like we have given up and sailed our fleet behind some island, but really about 30 of us will hide inside the horse. We will have someone tell the Trojans that it is some kind of gift to Athena, the goddess of war, and they will haul it into their city. When they are asleep, we will all sneak out, open the gates for everybody else, and totally kill everybody in the city.

And that is the legend of the Trojan horse.

So what is the moral of that story and why am I reciting Greek lore on the floor of Congress today?

Well, because history has a way of repeating itself. Today we have our own Trojan horse, a so-called GOP healthcare bill, TrumpCare, that professes to be about health care but, in reality, is a Trojan horse to give tax breaks to the wealthiest in the country.

Let's take a serious look at it. We are told that it is the replacement to the Affordable Care Act, a bill that has offered insurance to over 20 million people in this country. Now that replacement is supposed to fix the problems of the Affordable Care Act and ensure health care for everyone, as promised by President Trump.

But the covert part of TrumpCare was that he got busted last week when the Congressional Budget Office, our nonpartisan agency that evaluates bills, said that, in reality, the bill does little to improve health care. In fact, it